

Aboriginal Peoples, the Canadian Senate, &
Discriminatory Legislation:
the personal is political

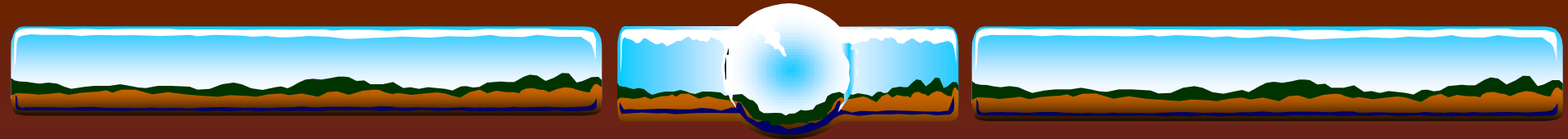
Senator Lillian Eva (Quan) Dyck, Ph. D., D. Litt.

Nutana Collegiate, Oct 14, 2008



Outline

1. My family roots
2. Aboriginals in the Senate of Canada
3. Discriminatory legislation
4. The solution: new legislation
5. Questions, comments



Dad's Chinese family: Quan Sue Hoe & children



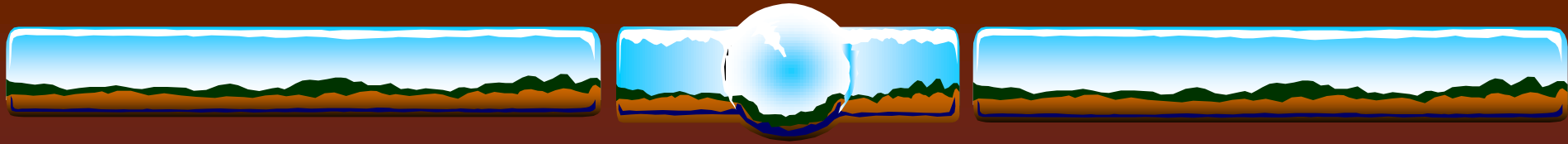
Discriminatory Legislation

- ❖ The Head tax was applied specially to Chinese (1885-1923).
- ❖ The Chinese Immigration (exclusion) Act (1923-1947).



June 2006

- ❖ Head Tax apology by PM Harper
- ❖ Redress to surviving head tax payers



My mother lost her status when she married a non-Indian.



Did my mother deliberately marry out in
1942?

Hiding her and our Indian identity was a
strategy to protect us from racism.

Keeping us off the reserve protected us from abuse.

A decorative header at the top of the slide features a central white globe with a blue and white pattern, set within a horizontal frame. The frame is divided into three sections: the left and right sections show a stylized landscape with green hills and brown ground under a blue sky, while the middle section contains the globe. The entire header is set against a dark red background.

Eva M. Quan, 1920-1956



Mom's message to Winston and me:

Pretend you're just Chinese.

Don't go back to the reserve.

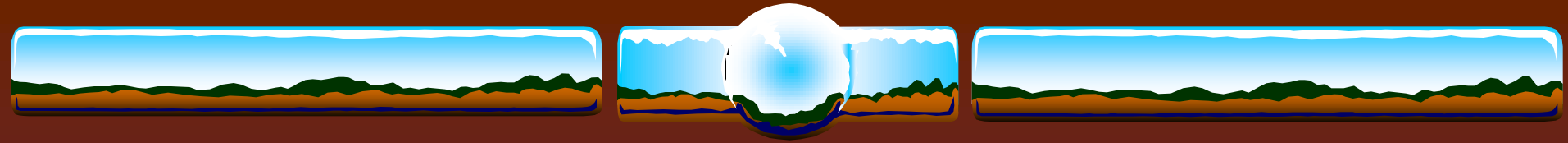
A decorative header at the top of the slide features a central globe with a blue and white color scheme. The globe is flanked by two rectangular panels, each containing a stylized landscape with green hills and brown ground under a blue sky. The entire header is set against a dark red background.

I regained my status in 1985
through Bill C-31



Other Discriminatory Laws

1. Chinese men were not allowed to hire white women to work for them. (the Female Employment Act, SK, 1912 – 1969)
2. Chinese-Canadians did not the vote until 1947.
3. Status Indians did not get the vote until 1960.



The Senate of Canada



Being sworn in as a Senator, April 2005
1st First Nations female senator

Speaker Hays, me, Clerk Belisle

Nathan, me, Winston



The Senate, October 2005

Women		37
Men		65
Aboriginals		7 (5 men, 2 women)
Liberals	68	
Conservative	23	
PC	5	
Independent	5	
NDP	1	
Vacancies	3	
Total	105	



Aboriginals in the Senate

There have been 13 Aboriginal senators:

2 Inuit

3 Metis

8 First Nations



First Indian Senator

Senator James Gladstone

1958 – 1971

Independent Conservative, Lethbridge AB





First Metis Senator

Senator William Boucher

1957 – 1976

Liberal, Prince Albert SK





First Inuit Senator

Senator Willie Adams

1977 – present

Liberal, NWT, Nunavut





First Female Metis Senator

Senator Thelma Chalifoux

1997 – 2004

Liberal, Alberta





First Female Indian Senator

Senator Lillian Eva Dyck

2005 – present

Independent NDP, North Battleford SK



Mary Two-Axe Early

A Mohawk woman from Kahnawakhe, PQ



One of the women leaders challenging gender discrimination in the Indian Act, and the 1st to have her status restored via Bill C-31.

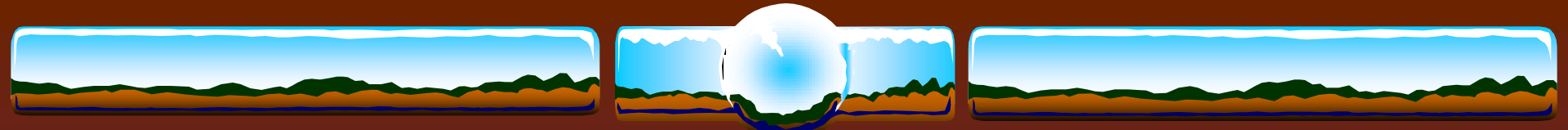


Sandra Lovelace Nicholas

1st First Nations female senator from Atlantic Canada

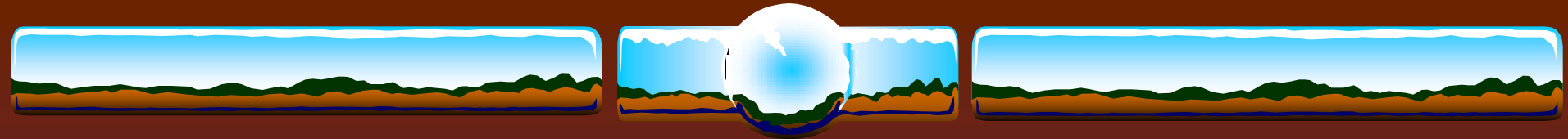


A Maliseet woman who successfully appealed to the UN to remove gender discrimination from the Indian Act.



The rights of Indian women are still less than those of Indian men

i.	Indian women do not have equal rights to matrimonial property or assets on reserves.
ii.	Indian women who regained status may not have been accepted as band members – thus they may not have been able to return to their reserve and to their former homes.
iii.	Such losses are linked to poverty and this is linked to susceptibility to violence in urban communities.



NWAC Protest against Bill C-31

Ottawa June 2005

A decorative header at the top of the slide. It features a central white globe with a blue shadow, set against a background of a stylized landscape with green hills and brown ground. The entire header is framed by a blue border with a white glow effect.

So ... what can be done?

- ❖ Enact new, better legislation to fix the problem.

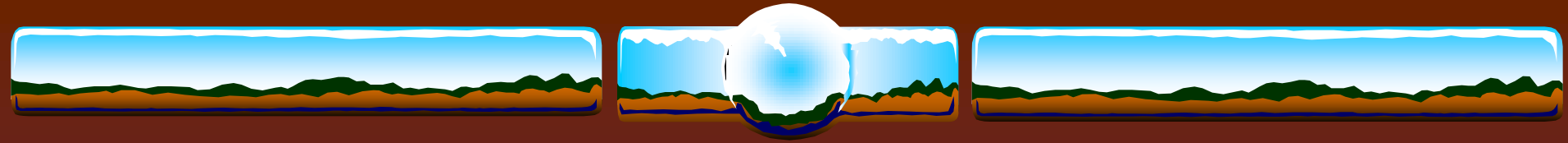


Concluding Comments

Legislation has defined us by defining who we are and our rights.

Aboriginals do not have the same rights under the Canadian Charter of Human Rights. But Bill C-21 is intended 'fix' that.

Aboriginal women do not have the same matrimonial property rights as non-Aboriginal women. And Bill C-47 is meant fix that.



Questions? Comments?